THE TOAD.

By A. C. Benson.

Old fellow-loiterer, whither wouldst thou go?
The lonely eve is ours,
When tides of richer fragrance ooze and flow
From heavy-lidded flowers.

With solemn, hampered pace proceeding by
The dewy garden-bed,
Like some old priest in antique finery,
Stiff cope and jewelled head;

Thy sanctuary lamps are lit at dusk,
When leafy aisles are dim;
The bat's shrill piccolo, the swinging musk
Blend with the beetle's hymn.

Abhorred, despised, the sad wind o'er thee sings;
Thou hast no friend to fear,
Yet fashioned in the secret mint of things
And bidden to be here.

OUT OF STEP.

XVIII.

"THE END IS VISION."

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"What is all this about Salome's not going South this fall?" Moore asked the next day as he found Mrs. Gerry alone.

"Hasn't she told you?" was the return question.

"She says she is afraid to go," he answered.

Moore's voice involuntarily softened as he said this. To him there was always an undertone of pathos in everything connected with his wife.

The two did not discuss the reason for Salome's fear.

"Are you going to urge her to go?" inquired Mrs. Gerry.

"No; she shall do as she pleases. Only, for the sake of her health, I wish she did not feel this way."

Mrs. Gerry appeared to be deeply considering the cranberries she was picking over. Finally she said: "Sometimes I feel like advising you to insist upon her going."

"But she has such a strong feeling; she says she can't trust herself. Mother, do you think that is all mere fancy? Just a womanish notion which I ought to combat?"

Mrs. Gerry took another handful of berries. She looked at them intently, but blindly. Her lips were pressed closely together.

"Don't combat it," she at last replied. "The older I grow the more I see the uselessness of meddling with the individuality of another. But it takes a lifetime to learn that. I thought I brought Salome up right, but now I don't know. She was just like other good, conscientious girls—only nicer—until she went South and got well. Then she seemed to shed her bringing-up as snakes shed their skins. It wasn't any part of her, after all; and I had thought that it was."

Mrs. Gerry dropped the berries, which she had not picked over, into the wrong dish. She pushed the chair which held the two dishes away from her, and sat upright. But she was deliberate in her movements; there was no appearance of disturbance about her.

"Randolph," she said.

She placed her berry-stained hand on his arm.

"I'm afraid she'll try you a good deal as the years go on. Do you think you can be patient with her?"

"I do think so," was the answer, with solemn earnestness. And he added, "You know I love her."

Moore took the hand from his arm and held it an instant. He had one serious talk with his wife on the subject of going South; he felt that he must do that; but the matter was decided as Salome wished. Moore could not remonstrate with her when her sole reason for remaining in the North was that she felt that she could thus the better school herself to be what he approved.

Unknown to his wife Moore consulted a celebrated physician as to the probability of her being able to stay at home without harm to herself. It was that same Dr. Bowdoin who had been summoned by Mr. Gerry to prescribe for his daughter.

Moore tried to believe that it was solely on account of her weak chest that he did thus, but secretly he longed to have a skilled and unbiassed opinion concerning a few of Salome's characteristics. Without giving details which would have been compromising, he yet made a rather clear statement of some of Salome's tendencies.

The physician took his words with that easy comfortableness which is so cheering.

"Ah, I see," he said. "Her real self and her nurture are at variance; that's confusing. We are bound to live our real selves more or less, and we often confound what we were born to be with what we are educated to be. A matter of heredity frequently does not display itself until certain surroundings call it into life. This is evidently very marked in this case. And she is abnormal to a degree, of course. You needn't start; we are all more or less abnormal; we must own up to that. It's only the rank and file who are not in the least so. A person with no marked mental or physical idiosyncrasy is strictly normal. Now about her going South—" Here the doctor meditated a moment. He asked two or three questions.

"I would advise her to go," he said.

Moore was more perturbed by the advice than he had expected to be, for he had anticipated this counsel.

He kept it to himself for some days; then he informed Mrs. Gerry, who tried to conceal her distress.

But there was the fact that Salome suffered little from the previous winter, and that she seemed well now. Still the two decided that she must know what the doctor had said.

She only smiled at the information. It plainly had not the slightest effect upon her.

And so the subject was definitely dropped. The project of almost forcing a woman to go South was not to be thought of.

The fall days continued so beautiful that it seemed as if they would never cease.

But at last a warm rain began, and when, after two days, it stopped a sharp wind from the northwest sprang up and raved over the fields and woods, stripping off the late lingering leaves, making the sky a steel blue. At sunset it subsided, but there was not one cricket brave enough to make a sound over all the land round about.

The squashes and pumpkins were brought and put under piazza roofs. The farmers' wives carefully took up the house plants which they had set in the garden for the summer, and they spread old comforters over some late blooms that they might enjoy them a few days more. "For," they said, "we shall have a little more warm weather after this cold spell."

The next morning the white frost was on everything; it even covered the grass on the south side of the Gerry cottage.

And there was no "warm spell" after it. Winter came on hurriedly. Flurries of snow hastened through the air. The chick-a-dees flitted cheerily among the trees. But the bluebirds were all gone.

"Don't you change your mind the least little bit?" asked Moore, as he and his wife breasted the sharp wind in a walk from the postoffice one day.

This same wind had given her a lovely color. She laughed gayly.

"I'm always changing my mind," she answered, "but not about going South. And, Randolph," taking his arm, "it's all for your sake. I'm getting to know myself so well."

The two women wished to stay in the country until after Christmas; then the Moores would set up housekeeping in Boston, and Mrs. Gerry would live with them.

Moore had taken a house, and it gave Salome and her mother a great deal of interesting employment to oversee the furnishing of it.

The cold weather seemed to have no effect on Salome. She was in the best of spirits. She would have cheered her husband and her mother if they had needed cheering.

One day she suddenly said to Moore:

"You didn't mount my portrait after all?"

She had not mentioned the subject before, and had asked no questions when her husband had briefly told her that he and the artist were dissatisfied with the work.

"Yes, certainly, I wanted it," he answered promptly. "I meant to talk with you about that, but I haven't done so. And I wondered that you were not curious."

"I was curious, but I guessed."

"Well, what did you guess?" Moore turned toward her and asked his question quickly.

It had seemed to him before his marriage that it would be endlessly interesting to study Salome. And he was still of the same mind. If there were lacking in this study an element of rest quite necessary to every day life, who was to blame? Not Salome, surely.

"I guessed that the portrait was too much like me," she replied.

She was watching his face, and she added: "And now I know I was right."

Neither tried to continue the subject. It was something that it seemed quite impossible to talk about; and now to Moore, looked at in the light of the past, and without the portrait before him, the whole affair had a fanciful and ludicrous aspect. He would have unmercifully derided the incident had others been concerned in it. Or so he half thought now.

He still was obliged to go to New-York occasionally concerning the property he had inherited and to arrange as to a business project. Because he was now a rich man was no reason why, in his eyes, he should be an idle one. He was essentially active, and he had a strong taste for mercantile pursuits. He had intended, however, to allow these plans to remain in the background through the winter, which he had expected to spend in the South. Now this was changed.

Meanwhile the two women were busy with household furnishings. To the elder woman these furnishings seemed wickedly lavish; but the younger one took easily and naturally to all luxuries, though she was perfectly content without them.

Coming out to the cottage one night in the week before Christmas, Salome and her mother found that there was no "depot wagon" in waiting at the station. It had been discontinued for the season for the first time that day. The agent said "it didn't pay for cart-wheel grease to run a carriage in the winter for this train, so old Little had stopped."

The only two passengers who had alighted here stood a moment on the platform by the agent, who was swinging his lantern back and forth. It had snowed in the forenoon; but afterward the weather had grown warmer. It was mild and starlight now, and the clear crescent of a new moon was in the west.

"It's only a mile and a half, mother," said Salome, "we must walk."

"I wish 'twas better going," was the response. "But it's no use trying to get a horse, for we can't do it."

So they set out. It was only 6 o'clock, but the feeling and the aspect of the surroundings indicated midnight at least.

They walked through what in this part of the country was currently and graphically called "posh," and trousers and rubber boots are the suitable array for any one who must travel in such stuff.

Although these two had overshoes on their feet, a woman's overshoes amount to very little in the way of protection, except against a slight dampness.

After a few rods their feet were soaked in snow water. Then they ceased trying to pick their way with raised skirts and hesitating steps after the manner of women.

"We might as well splash right along," said Salome, who was in high spirits.

So they did splash along through the half-melted snow. And when they reached home they changed their clothes, brewed some ginger tea and drank it, sitting side by side in front of the cook-stove with their feet in the oven.

"If you only haven't taken cold," said Mrs. Gerry, as they sipped their drink and were comfortable and cosey.

"If you only haven't taken cold yourself!" was the retort, with a gay laugh and a hug from the arm whose hand did not hold the cup of ginger tea.

Mrs. Gerry rose toward morning and went into her daughter's room.

"Is that you, mother?" inquired the fresh young voice in a wideawake manner.

"I was so foolish as to get to worrying," was the apologetic reply.

Salome raised herself on her arm. Her eyes shone in the lamplight.

"You must act on the ground that there is no such thing as catching cold," she said; "then you can't take cold because there's no cold to take."

Salome laughed a little, gave a slight cough and put her head back on the pillow.

She looked so very wideawake that her mother asked if she had been asleep.

"I don't think I have," was the answer; "but my thoughts have been so unusually clear that I have quite enjoyed them."

There was something, she hardly knew what, that now thoroughly alarmed Mrs. Gerry; therefore she was apparently more than usually calm and matter of fact.

That day Salome did not seem really ill, though she did not refuse to sit or lie all day long in the kitchen where her mother was persistently busy. And she was very gay. One might almost have said that something—what could it be?—had happened to please her.

Sometimes she coughed shortly and dryly. Twice when she did so there was a spot of bright scarlet on her handkerchief. But her mother did not know that.

Without knowing that, however, Mrs. Gerry had gone over to Mr. Scudder's for butter, and had asked Mr. Scudder to drive to the station and telegraph to that Dr. Bowdoin who had, a few years before, sent Salome to Florida.

But no hint of this errand could be seen in her manner when she returned with the butter.

The two talked cheerfully. When evening came Salome coughed a little more, and her cheeks were red. Her mother brought her some milk to drink. She made a pretence of wanting it very much, but she could not quite conceal the effort required to enable her to drink it.

When it drew toward midnight Mrs. Gerry told Salome that she expected Dr. Bowdoin from Boston in that train; Mr. Scudder would bring him from the station. She added, by way of explanation:

"I was afraid you might have a touch of pneumonia, and I wanted the best advice; since I knew Randolph would approve."

Before the doctor arrived a bed had been put up in the bit of a sitting-room, and Salome was established in it. She was still so cheerful as to be almost gay. She said it was really absurd to make any arrangement like that.

When Dr. Bowdoin came he sat by Salome's bed for half an hour. He put very few questions. Only talked a little with her.

In the kitchen with Mrs. Gerry he asked sharply:

"Why didn't she go South, as I recommended? She would have been saved this."

Mrs. Gerry was white, but composed.

"We couldn't persuade her to go," she answered. She made a moment's pause, then she asked firmly:

"Will you tell me how she is? I must know."

The man looked at her keenly.

"You know just as well as I do," he answered, "that she is bad—very bad. She is going to have that kind of phthisis which only lasts a few weeks."

Mrs. Gerry stood erect. She did not make a gesture.

Dr. Bowdoin placed a chair for her and gently made her sit.

"It sounds brutal to tell you," he said, "but one must know the truth. Isn't your daughter happy?" he inquired.

"Very happy," was the answer.

"But she doesn't want to live," was the startling statement from the doctor.

Mrs. Gerry could not speak. She looked at the man before her.

"I'm sure of it," he added, "though she said no such thing. But it makes no difference. She has this predisposition—it could not be safe for her to spend winters in this climate. In fact, she ought to have lived all the time South."

Then followed some directions, to which Mrs. Gerry listened carefully.

The doctor said he would come again in three days. Mr. Scudder, a few moments later, took him to an adjoining town, where he could catch a train to Boston.

Mrs. Gerry was left alone in the cottage with Salome.

She sat down on the lounge where Salome had lain the day before. She sat on the very edge, her hands lying in her lap.

She did not know how long she sat there, but not long.

Presently she rose and went softly to the door of the sitting-room.

Her child was sleeping now. Her child. Not the grown woman and wife, but her child.

"Our little girl," her husband used to call her.

She stood in the middle of the room. Every one knows how keen is the mechanical vision at such times.

Mrs. Gerry's eyes took in every homely detail of the place. She saw a slip of paper on the lounge by the pillow where Salome had been lying that day. Without knowing or caring what it was, the woman picked up the newspaper cutting, adjusted her glasses, and held it to the lamp. She read it, or she would have said she was reading it, though her mind did not at first take in a single word, much less an idea.

She did not know what to do. She stood there with the lamp in one hand and the slip in the other.

Presently, however, her mind absorbed the printed lines, and, as sometimes happens, they immediately began to form part of this experience. Afterward she could never recall this illness without recalling, word for word, what she read then. And always her whole being strenuously and piteously rebelled, as we mortals must rebel to the end of time, even though we have phases of faith and hope.

Where are the voices Kings were glad to hear?
Where now the feast, the song, the bayadere?
The end is nothing, and the end is near.

And yonder lovely rose; alas! my dear!
See the November garden rank and drear;
The end is nothing, and the end is near.

Then vex thyself no more with thought austere,
Take what thou canst while thou abidest here,
Seek finer pleasures each returning year;

The end is nothing, and the end is near.
Joy is the Lord, and Love his charioteer;
Be tranquil and rejoicing, oh, my dear!

Shun the wild seas, far from the breakers steer;
The end is vision and the end is near.
List to the wisdom learned of Saint and Seer!

The living Lord is Joy, and peace His sphere;
Rebel no more! Throw down thy shield and spear,
Surrender all thyself; true life is here;

The end is vision and the end is near.
Forget not this, forget not that, my dear!
'Tis all and nothing, and the end is near.
—Writ on a ruined palace in Kashmir.

Having read these verses twice through, Mrs. Gerry walked across the room and carefully placed the lamp on the table. She noiselessly put some wood in the stove. She would sit up the rest of the night. Why should she lie down? She could not sleep. Probably Salome would not need her, but she could not sleep.

And the child had been reading such words as these? They were Pagan words. There was no glimmer of high faith in them. It was as if this world were all there was. This world! Why, this world was nothing, nothing. In the world to come was the substance, the fruition, the fulfilment of God's promises. If it were not so—— Here the woman's thoughts, which had gone on coherently, suddenly paused, as over a black abyss. But her faith spread wings to fly over this abyss. If that faith might only take Salome, her own child, with her. In death, as in life, she must take care of Salome.

Sitting there motionless, with her hands resting on the slip of paper, the mother endured that night what she could never tell.

And in the next room Salome slept.

In the morning Mrs. Gerry, when she was sure her daughter was fully awake, took in a dainty breakfast, carefully arranged. She said that, as Salome had fallen asleep so late, she would indulge her.

By noon the invalid was up and dressed and in the armchair by the kitchen stove. She would rather be where her mother was at work. She did not seem very ill. Mrs. Gerry had not sent for Moore, because he was to arrive this afternoon.

Salome sat where she could see him when he turned the curve in the road from the station. There he was, tall and strong, and striding along briskly. He recognized her and tossed up his hat. She saw his eyes shine; his teeth gleamed under his yellow mustache.

Mrs. Gerry was furtively watching her daughter's face. A look of intense agony was on that face for an instant; then it was gone. Salome did not take her gaze from her husband as long as he was in sight.

The next moment he had entered the room and she had sprung up to meet him.

All the rest of the day Mrs. Gerry felt like a coward. She carefully avoided being alone with Moore for a moment. It seemed to her that she could not say to him what she knew she must say.

At last the time came. Moore followed her out into the shed, where the wood was stored. Salome was asleep on the lounge. She had been coughing, and he had seen the splotches of blood on her handkerchief, though she did not know that he had seen them.

Mrs. Gerry felt her arm taken in a fierce hold.

She looked up. Meeting the young man's eyes she suddenly leaned against him, shivering.

But he did not shiver. He was tense.

"We will go to Florida next week," he whispered eagerly. "The South cured her before; it will cure her again."

He held his companion closely to him.

She shook her head.

"No; no. It will do no good. The doctor will tell you. But I don't need any doctor to tell me. I've seen this before. We must try to be cheerful with her."

She removed herself from Moore's hold. He kept himself rigid.

"Good God! Good God!" he cried. "I can't bear it."

He went out of doors. He had gone only a few yards when Mrs. Gerry called him back; she had his hat and overcoat. She told him that he must keep well.

When Dr. Bowdoin came out he forbade them to think of going South.

"Make her as comfortable as you can here," he said.

One day Salome told Moore that there were two or three things she wanted to say. He responded that there was time enough in which to say things.

But she insisted. She was quite calm, as sick people will often be.

She explained that one reason why she had decided that she would not go South was because she thought that perhaps this very thing would happen. She almost hoped it would.

She moved more closely to him. "This is much the best way. And now I'm sure you will always think of me as I long to have you think. And if I went on living year after year, I couldn't possibly keep being good. I'm convinced of that. And to be by your side through a long life, and to be out of step with you, and out of step with true and high things which you value, and which my mother values——" here she broke off, "but oh, Randolph, we've known what it is to be happy, haven't we?"

Moore did not speak. He sat silently holding her.

They took care of her for more than two months. In March she died.

A dark, saturnine man who had not come near the cottage, sometimes, later, went to the grave.

The neighbors were surprised that "Redd" took it so hard. "He didn't say anything, but he wasn't the same."

Often Moore stood by the grave, and with him was a spare woman now seeming long past middle age. And this young man and this elderly woman knew "that their keenest joy and keenest sorrow were forever buried there."

THE END.

A MAN AND A SHADE.

AN OLD PURITAN AND BILLY CLAGGETT.

AT A THANKSGIVING DINNER.

(Copyright, 1893, by Sam Walter Foss.)

Melchizedek Adoniram Jones, two hundred years ago
In peaceful rest laid down his bones and left this world of woe;
A Puritan of ancient breed, sweet may his soul repose;
A man who loved his holy creed and preached it through his nose.

The spirit of Melchizedek Jones roamed through the fields of light,
Walked o'er the City's golden stones by rivers of delight;
But once upon Thanksgiving Day he heard a sound of mirth
Come floating heavenward on its way from the rejoicing earth.

"Ah, me," says he, "this is the day we 'stablished long ago;
How quick the years have rolled away, how fast the centuries go!
I fain once more would see the earth, though after many years,
From which this most unseemly mirth is floating to my ears."

Melchizedek Adoniram Jones then slipped away to earth
And sought the town where rest his bones, the town that gave him birth.
His great-great-great-great grandson's home he entered boldly free
And said, "I will no longer roam; here I abide with thee."

"But why, my great-great-great," said he, "why this ungodly glee?
Why this unhallowed revelry, this graceless jollity?
Turn ye from wanton pleasure's path, refrain from this mad mirth,
Lest I arise and in my wrath I smite ye to the earth.

"What vain apparel I behold thine helpmeet's proud array—
The silks of Sidon and the gold of Tarshish shall decay.
Thy gold shall tarnish, jewels rust, and fade thy silken sashes—
Away and sit thee in the dust in sackcloth and in ashes.

"Out with your tinkling music vain, your loud abomination!
More fitting were a funeral strain to mourn your desolation.
The furnace of my wrath is hot, my righteous anger high;
I'll cry aloud and spare ye not and smite ye hip and thigh.

"And these vain books, the vainest thing the heart of man entices,
So full of vain imagining and many strange devices—
And Shakespeare, too? Still 'neath the stars lives his unhallowed mirth?
I trusted our anathemas had driven him from earth.

"Why gorge ye with this foolish spoil and make a feasting day,
This wealth of meat and wine and oil when ye should fast and pray?
And wherefore is this riotous feast, these Egypt fleshpots here?
Why gorge ye, like the gluttonous beast, when ye should quake with fear?

"Why make your children such a din, why is their glee so great?
Depraved—conceived and born in sin and wholly reprobate—
Before their great sins let them quail, and let their grief be deep;
In contrite sorrow let them wail and gnash their teeth and weep."

"Good saint!" replied his great-great-great, "I note your warm appeal.
Your manners may not be ornate, though I respect your zeal,
But we believe that childish pranks spring not from Satan's guile,
And men may offer heartfelt thanks and keep their clothes in style.

"But come, my great-great-great, sit down and try our modern fare,
Relax your Puritanic frown and smooth your ruffled hair."
The Puritan began to eat; his frown, it passed away;
He felt the kindly influence sweet—the spirit of the day.

The turkey vanished like a dream, the pudding did not stay,
The viands in a steady stream all seemed to flow his way,
And him-ward, all that dinner hour, the stream of victuals poured,
And his assimilative power astonished all the board.

Between the pudding and the pie he lifted up his voice,
"Rejoice! Rejoice!" they heard him cry, "again I say rejoice!
Give thanks for this your modern lot, and all your modern bliss,
I wish," he said, "John Endicott could taste a meal like this!"

BILLY CLAGGETT'S WANTS.

Little Billy Claggett said if he could have a dog for his very own he would be happy. And as the great glory of life consisted in the ownership of a dog, little Billy Claggett never tasted the sweetest wine of existence throughout those early dogless years.

But the day came when Billy owned a dog. But still there was something the matter with Billy. He was not all right. There was an unattainable star danced before him every hour, a star not too high for him to admire, but altogether too high for him to reach.

This star, to speak less poetically but more graphically, was a goat and a goat cart. His views on dogs had changed. It is reported that he said more than once, "Dogs is no good." Rachel never mourned for her children as Billy Claggett mourned for a goat and a goat-cart.

And the day came when Billy got his goat and his goat-cart. The mighty powers that govern the universe so arranged the great cosmic machinery from the beginning of time that it turned out the goat and goat-cart for Billy just in time to prevent Billy's life from becoming shattered by disappointment and hope deferred. This goat and this goat-cart put little Billy Claggett for a time in harmony with the great universe.

But the universe and Billy Claggett never got along together for any length of time. Billy began to droop from ennui. He soon became too blasé for goats and goat-carts to please his sophisticated tastes. Once more he reached out for the unattainable.

The unattainable this time was a pony. But it seemed as easy for Billy to become the owner of certain real estate lots on the other side of the moon as to become the owner of a pony. He cried: "Pony! pony!" But there was no pony. Billy now grew entirely out of sorts with the universe. He said: "The universe may go its way and I will go mine. We have nothing in common."

But the universe didn't get angry, and at length out of its abysmal depths of possibility it produced a pony for Billy Claggett.

Was Billy Claggett happy? Oh, yes—for a whole day. But Billy soon discovered that he was too big a boy for ponies. He must go to school and college and become learned and great and rich. So he went to school and filled his head full of rules and exceptions—and as a rule he forgot the exceptions, and it was an exception when he remembered the rules. And he studied dead languages for eight years, and he became so wonderfully proficient in them that he could almost read them by the help of a translation.

But still, with all his wonderful learning, there was something the matter with Billy—but perhaps we had better call him William now—for the sweet dream of love had come into William's life, and it is entirely out of consonance with the eternal harmony of things to call a young man "Billy" who spends an hour and a half adjusting his necktie, and who languishes and yearns. Billy cannot yearn; only William can yearn.

And William yearned. But the sweet object of his dreams was unattainable—yes, as unattainable as the pony or the dog or the goat. But there is one curious thing about unattainable things—it is very easy to obtain them.

And William got his girl, as the wise reader knew he would all the time. Did they live happily together? Tush! tush! It is not my business to retail family gossip. I simply digress right here and say that William went into politics.

He now wanted to go to Congress as bad as ever he wanted that goat. And so he went round to all the rallies and took a large assortment of gestures with him and a great variety of facial expressions, and told the people that nothing but his election would restore confidence to the country, and that his opponent was a bad man who had been corrupted by British gold, and was working for the interests of Europe. But Billy—pardon me, the Hon. William W. Claggett, of Claggettsville—was elected, because the universe was on his side, as was also Patrick O'Flaherty, boss of the fo'rt ward.

But still there was something the matter with the Hon. William W. Claggett of Claggettsville. It is true he got all his speeches he didn't make printed in "The Congressional Record." But he grew tired of the perpetual round of legislation, and longed to get into the United States Senate, where legislation is not permitted. Now he says if he can get elected President and have a million-dollar monument built over his remains when he dies, and his son William Claggett, jr., can succeed to his wealth and political power, he will be perfectly happy.

But he wouldn't be. And why wouldn't he? Why? Because he is just like the rest of us. And I have just told this story anyway in a kind of a sneaking way that I have, in order that the reader, in the mirror of the Hon. William W. Claggett, may behold his own countenance. I have been talking about William W. Claggett. But thou art the man! And so am I! And I am glad of it. For when a man becomes entirely satisfied, it is time for his friends to make arrangements for his funeral services. SAM WALTER FOSS.

When the late composer, Peter Tschaikoffsky, was going to Cambridge last June to receive his honorary degree as the representative of Russian music, he was observed to be in a state of great nervousness. This, it subsequently appeared, was not due to any awe of the university, but to belief that the ceremony would be physically painful. He was convinced that the ceremony of conferring a degree was accompanied with the tortures which are popularly supposed to be employed among Free-Masons, and was consequently in a state of great fright at the prospect.

THE CHRONICLE OF ARTS.

EXHIBITIONS AND OTHER TOPICS.

THE SUCCESS OF THE WATER-COLOR SHOW—MR. ST. GAUDENS'S NEW DIANA—THE STATUE OF NATHAN HALE—OLD PORTRAITS FROM EGYPT—MINOR OCCURRENCES.

The Water Color Club's exhibition, it is pleasing to learn, is meeting with the success it deserves. During its first four days nearly 700 persons visited the galleries, and only about 150 of these were students. The majority were all bearers of full-priced admission tickets. The following sales have been reported: "His Country Cousins," by Leon Moran, $125; "Ready for the Dance," by Leon Moran, $40; "Rolling Ground," by Mary R. Williams, $25; "Winter Evening," by L. E. Van Gorder, $30; "Zephyrs," by Mabel H. Smith, $18; "Lamplight," by Lydia F. Emmet, $100; "The Coming Storm," by S. P. Triscott, $250; "Child with Lantern," by Albert Herter, $100; "The Flower-Cart Dance," by Albert Herter, $250; "Across Tokyo Bay from Nieta," by Albert Herter, $150. Total of sales, $1,088. When the water-color show and the Egyptian portraits referred to below have been withdrawn, about the 8th of next month, the Architectural League and the Sculpture Society will take charge of the galleries and open their combined exhibitions on December 15. In January the Fine Arts Society will exhibit the pictures shown in the Swedish and Norwegian sections at the World's Fair—a wise plan as regards the Swedish paintings, but an ill-advised one as regards the Norwegian. The Society of American Artists opens in March and occupies the galleries until some time in April, when the Society of Amateur Photographers is to have an exhibition. Among current exhibitions we would call attention particularly to the pictures by Cazin at the American Art Galleries. He is among the finest of living landscapists, and this collection does him full justice. The Grolier Club is preparing an exhibition of Waltoniana. It will include some rare editions of the gentle Izaak.

The chaste goddess once more presides over Madison Square Garden. When Mr. St. Gaudens designed the Diana which surmounted the tower until the opening of the World's Fair he made her too tall. She was transferred to the low, swelling dome of the Agricultural Building, and there she proved to be in scale with her pedestal. The figure which the sculptor then proceeded to model and which has been placed on the tower within the last few days is in every way an improvement upon the earlier work. Where the finial was once nineteen feet high, it now measures only thirteen feet, and in its new form it reminds us, among other things, that it is a finial indeed, as well as a statue; that its relation to the structure beneath it is as important as its intrinsic beauty. The old Diana was so large as to be aggressive, and looked more like an independent figure perched upon the tower than a beautified utilitarian adjunct to the latter. She was fair, but the present Diana is fairer. She rested on her heel, but her successor is poised more gracefully and naturally on her toe. In everything that relates to contour, to nuance of movement and attitude, and to refinement and individuality of execution, the new Diana is incomparably the superior of the old. She ought to be, for she has been restudied with the utmost interest by Mr. St. Gaudens. He modified the lines of her scarf, changed the style of her bow, and calculated her proportions narrowly. As a termination to Mr. White's fine tower she is now as logical as she is charming. And still, in the eyes of Mr. St. Gaudens, she is not perfect. The tilt of the drapery does not satisfy him quite, it seems, and it is to be corrected.

A pupil of Mr. St. Gaudens who has reflected the greatest credit upon his master unveiled in City Hall Park yesterday his best statue. The colossal fountain in the Court of Honor at Chicago has given Mr. Macmonnies a certain celebrity, but the "Nathan Hale" which he has just added to the slender list of good monuments in New-York will give him more. It will, we believe, give him a good share of the lasting reputation which his talents seem to promise, and it will give it him precisely because in this work he is really monumental—something which he was not in the beautiful but somewhat unsatisfactory fountain. The statue of the devoted American spy has all the dignity which would remain to him in such an ignominious moment of his career as Mr. Macmonnies has chosen to celebrate. Thus Nathan Hale might have stood as he uttered his famous words of regret, a serious, even impressive, figure, without a trace of theatricality in his bearing. The realism of the statue may perhaps be criticised, but not with justice. Mr. Macmonnies might appeal to Rodin's great group, the "Bourgeois de Calais" if he needed a precedent for the presence of the ropes about his subject's arms and legs. The Frenchman has not scrupled to show his heroes with halters. As it happens the Hale needs no precedent. It justifies itself. Though the spectacle of the man's humiliation may be repugnant to our feelings, if we grant the wisdom of portraying him in this fashion, we must admit that the ropes do the lines of the statue no harm. As a work of pure plastic art the latter is strong; it is conceived with spirit and composed with good taste. Its best qualities are in its handling. As a modeller Mr. Macmonnies is more than worthy of Mr. St. Gaudens. His workmanship is accomplished and it has a tone which, if slightly reminiscent of the sculptor's master, is, on the whole, his own. This statue ought to make glad the Municipal Art Society and the Sculpture Society. It is exactly the kind of ornament which they are striving to make popular in New-York.

Two thousand years ago, when the Egyptians mummified their dead, they laid over the face of the corpse a panel bearing a portrait of the latter and left exposed. The rest of the mummy was swathed in the wrappings with which museums have made us acquainted. Centuries ago some cemeteries near ancient Faijum in Egypt were rifled by marauders in search of precious metals and stones. The portraits were thrown aside to be covered by the sand as the wind listed and there they remained unharmed until some four or five years since, when, upon their discovery in the desert, Herr Theodor Graf purchased them and brought them to Vienna. Last summer they were exhibited on the Midway Plaisance at the Fair. Since then they have been on view in the Boston Museum and now they are to be seen in connection with the Water Color Club's exhibition. They possess great archaeological value, for they illustrate the pictorial art of a Hellenized civilization in Egypt which was wreaking its genius chiefly, as did the civilization of Greece itself, on plastic art. Painting being what it was two hundred years before Christ, an art imperfectly developed, still crude and limited, there is not any beauty, strictly speaking, in the interesting gallery of portraits Herr Graf has formed. The artists then, whether they painted in encaustic or distemper, had no conception of color, tone, transparency, light and shade, and so on, such as belongs to any modern painter. What they did have was the indefinable art of vitalizing a portrait, of making it live and speak long after all means of identifying its subject had disappeared. In a somewhat conventional way these portraits are astoundingly realistic. Centuries after their death the men and women who were the models for portraits like Nos. 2, 24, 7, 22, 21 and 28 greet you with an animation in the eyes and lips that painters of to-day might envy. They prove once more that the art of the ancients was nothing if not faithful to nature. Much curious value attaches to the panels and they are welcome objects of study. It would be gratifying if specimens from the collection were added to our Metropolitan Museum of Art. The great museums of London, Paris and Berlin have purchased portraits from Herr Graf, and New-York should profit by their example. To purchase the entire collection of seventy-five portraits, at the sum at which its owner holds it, $250,000, would be as impossible as it would be unadvisable. To secure a group of the best pieces in the collection ought to be a small matter for public spirited connoisseurs in New-York.

The fifth annual exhibition of American water colors at the Keppel Gallery, opened yesterday, contains fourscore pictures, among which it is possible to find some that are very good. Several of the better-known landscapists, Messrs. Murphy, Eaton, Shurtleff and Ranger, contribute artistic pictures, and there are one or two younger men, Mr. Jules Guerin and Mr. Alexander Robinson, whose studies of nature are important additions to the collection. Mr. Robinson, whose name is quite unfamiliar, has three Spanish sketches whose breezy style and bold harmonious coloring place them among the best things of the exhibition. Of the figure studies the most interesting are two pictures of girlish models by Mr. Francis Day, very decorative and elegant; one of Albert Lynch's nervous, brilliantly drawn fragments of social illustration; a cornfield scene by W. L. Lathrop, which has much sentiment and rustic charm, and a pretty impressionistic trifle by Mr. Amsden. There are pleasing landscapes by Messrs. Maratta, Gruppe, Manley, and Miss Wright; flower pieces by Miss Holston and Miss Matilda Browne, and some marines by J. C. Nicoll and F. K. M. Rehn. Mr. Lafarge has contributed a couple of South Sea sketches which we have yet to see, but of which it is safe to prophesy in a eulogistic key. In its general character the exhibition has the qualities, particularly desirable at Christmas time, which have been characteristic of the water-color shows preceding it at this place. At the Knoedler Gallery a French portrait painter, M. T. Chartran, and an American landscapist, Mr. William A. Coffin, have assembled small collections of their recent work. M. Chartran is a typically finished Parisian craftsman. His portrait of Mr. Fish, an elderly sitter of rather rugged features, is modelled with vigor and some breadth, but the portraits of Mrs. August Belmont and an unnamed young lady in pink, which are his best works here, are remarkable chiefly for a precise method resulting in clean, sharp outlines and clear color. He is a portrait painter with ability, and with sympathy for his sitters. He merits the introduction to the public which this exhibition gives him. To the sincerity, intelligence and veracity of Mr. Coffin's landscape work we have more than once testified. The collection of paintings he now exhibits is smaller, we think, and it is certainly less impressive in a purely pictorial way than that which he brought forward nearly a year ago. We find fewer interesting scenes in the even dozen of landscapes, and there are one or two of the pictures, No. 2, for example, which are disappointing in technique. This panoramic view of a Pennsylvania valley has some brushing in it which is far less flowing and firm than Mr. Coffin has accustomed us to expect. But for clever rendering of light take No. 8, "September Afternoon"; for the feeling of a rural evening take No. 6, "The Rising Moon," and for the expression of atmosphere take No. 7, "A Shower at Sunset," or No. 5, "A Coming Storm." These pictures show Mr. Coffin in his best character, as a careful analyst of difficult moods in nature, and in them he maintains the standard which he has before this proved to be artistic and individual.

A FAMOUS "BEAT."

"THE LONDON TIMES" AND THE BARING CRISIS.

THE STORY TOLD BY THE RETIRING CITY EDITOR.

From The Westminster Gazette.

"Looking back over your work for 'The Times,' what do you consider the best thing you have ever done?"

Mr. Crump showed little hesitation in answering this question. "Beyond doubt," he replied, "the biggest coup which I ever achieved on behalf of 'The Times' was that effected over the Baring crisis, of the first intimation of which 'The Times,' as you will doubtless remember, had the exclusive announcement. I suppose it is no exaggeration to say that never before nor since has a piece of financial intelligence of such tremendous import been the exclusive possession of any one paper. Of course, it is the business of 'The Times' to be first, as we all know," added Mr. Crump, with a laugh; "but all the same, I cannot help congratulating myself on the part which I was able to play in sustaining its reputation in this respect on that occasion. It was 'The Times' first and the rest nowhere, and I confess I am proud of it.

"How did I manage it? Well, it was not easy, and it would take too long to tell the story at length. The first direct intimation I had of anything amiss was received from a well-known financier, whose name it is needless to mention, who called on me here. He was evidently in a state of great excitement, but beyond the bare hint that some terrible financial calamity was impending he could divulge nothing. 'I cannot tell you,' he said, in answer to my inquiries; 'it is impossible.' However, what he had told me was enough to convince me that something serious was about to happen, and to determine me to leave no stone unturned until I had discovered what it was, even if it involved my remaining at the task all night. Accordingly I instructed my assistants to keep the office open and to await my return, and sallied forth in quest of information. To whom I applied first I need not now state. Suffice it to say that he was, and is, a very important personage in the financial world. As it proved, beyond the mere corroboration of the fact that some grave trouble was at hand, he could give me no information, and I was compelled to depart no wiser than I had come.

"Pursuing my inquiries elsewhere, I found my way eventually to the Bank of England, where I was in hopes I might discover what I was seeking. It was past closing time when I got there. The clerks and officials were taking their departure, and not until I made myself known did I succeed in obtaining admission through the half-closed doors. Having done so, however, I made my way with all speed to the directors' quarters, and on doing so observed at once from the presence of various people about that something unusual was afoot. My suspicions were confirmed when on entering the anteroom I found the place all lighted up, and learned on inquiry that, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the directors of the bank were within in council with the managers of various other great London banking institutions. Of course I realized at once the profound significance of this, and soon made up my mind what to do.

"I sent in at once a note to the Governor, and asked Mr. Lidderdale to see me. To my delight he came out almost immediately, and accompanied me into an adjoining waiting-room. From his manner I saw immediately that the situation was serious, but more than this I could not ascertain at first. At length, however, I put the question point-blank, 'Is it Barings?' He did not answer, but slightly inclining his head indicated that my suspicion was correct. 'Do I understand, then,' I pursued, 'that Barings are in a position which necessitates recourse to outside assistance?' Again Mr. Lidderdale signified assent in the same manner as before. And then, of course, I was in possession of all that was necessary for my purpose. Before there had been suspicions, but they were only suspicions, and until they were verified could not be acted upon. Now I had obtained my verification, and the time for action had arrived. I returned, of course, to my office forthwith, and the next day all the world was in the secret."

Certainly it was a famous journalistic coup, and Mr. Crump's note of triumph is not unnatural. Probably most people, by the way, will be surprised to learn that in politics Mr. Crump is an ardent Liberal.

THE AMBITIOUS PLAY-WRITER.

From The St. James's Gazette.

Decidedly the ways of the aspiring playwright are peculiar. By the favor of a leading manager we are enabled to reproduce the following circular which has recently reached him in printed form, merely, of course, suppressing the real names:

"Mr. Budding Dramatist would be pleased to show the manager of the Blank Theatre a thirty-minute farce. It will perhaps economize the letter-writing time of spectacle-wearing managers if they will kindly refer to the brief correspondence below."

The correspondence alluded to duly follows:

"Dear Sir: Mr. So-and-so would be glad to read your farce if you like to send it on, providing it is type-written."

To this courteous invitation Mr. Budding Dramatist sends a reply which at once stamps him as the possessor of a neat and ready wit:

"Sir: The farce is not type-written. It is a contented little manuscript, and has no desire to rise above the state in which it has pleased Providence to place it."

This is admirable; although one is at rather a loss to understand why, if the manuscript has no desire to rise above the state in which, etc., the author should claim a manager's assistance to give it public performance.